

CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A measuring tape comprising:

a first axis;

~~a housing having an exterior surface and at least two spaced apart inwardly facing side wall surfaces defining a hollow interior of said housing;~~

a spool and a first sheave turnable together about said first axis

an elongate flexible blade having a free end and a terminal end, the free end adapted to extend out of said housing, said blade wound upon said spool and normally in a fully retracted position on said spool;

~~a spool mounted for rotation about a first axis within the hollow interior of said housing, the terminal end of said blade being secured to said spool to enable said blade to be helically stored thereon;~~

a second axis;

~~a first sheave mounted coaxially of the first axis to effect rotation of said spool about the first axis;~~

a spiral spring assembly and a second sheave mounted about a turnable together about said second axis, within the hollow interior of said housing spaced from and generally parallel with the first axis of said spool said spiral spring assembly including a spirally wound spring wound therearound and contained there within so as to wind and unwind about said second axis as said second sheave turns;

~~a second sheave mounted coaxially of the second axis to effect rotation of said spring assembly; and~~

~~means for transmitting rotational movement of said first sheave to said second sheave~~ a belt connecting said first sheave and said second sheave, whereby extension of said blade from its retracted position causes turning of said spool which in turn causes turning of said spring assembly to place the spring of said spring assembly in a spring-wound condition which spring will cause retraction of said blade upon release of said blade from an extended position.

2. (Currently Amended) A measuring tape as defined in Claim 1 ~~wherein the side walls of said~~ further comprising a housing are generally planar for enclosing said spool, said first sheave, said blade, said spring assembly, said second sheave, and said belt, said housing having a top, bottom sides, and ends with said elongate flexible blade having a free end adapted to extend out of said housing, the free end including a fixture adapted to be grasped by a user so as to extend said blade from its normally extracted position substantially inside said housing.

3. (Currently Amended) A measuring tape as defined in Claim 2 wherein said housing includes at least two spaced apart inwardly facing side wall surfaces defining a hollow interior of said housing, wherein ~~said~~ the side walls surfaces are substantially flat.

4. (Currently Amended) A measuring tape as defined in Claim 1 including distance measuring indicia ~~is~~ imprinted on said elongate flexible blade.

5. (Currently Amended) A measuring tape as defined in Claim 1 further comprising means for transmitting rotational movement of said first sheave to said second sheave, wherein said means for transmitting rotation of said first sheave to said second sheave ~~consists of a~~ is said flexible belt.

6. (Currently Amended) A measuring tape as defined in Claim 1 wherein the spring of said spring assembly includes ~~a spring~~, a bias of which increases in proportion to the extent of said flexible blade caused to be ~~payed~~ paid off of said spool.

7. (Currently Amended) A measuring tape as defined in Claim 1 including hand and finger contoured pads secured to ~~the~~ an exterior surface of ~~said~~ a housing.

8. (Currently Amended) A measuring tape as defined in Claim 1 wherein ~~the~~ a free end of said elongate blade includes a bracket which militates against the passage of the free end into ~~said~~ a housing.